



A fresh start in state office

■ 'My first bill? I have eight sitting on my desk right now.'

Andrew Raczowski
—new state representative

Raczowski takes oath as new rep

BY TOM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

"The legislature shall meet at the seat of government on the second Wednesday in January of each year at twelve o'clock noon." — Michigan Constitution art. IV sec. 12.

Little work got done on family day, when state representatives took their ceremonial oaths of office with spouses, kids, parents, friends and supporters packing the House floor and gallery.

"We've got 66 people here," said Christa Murphy, girlfriend of freshman Rep. Andrew Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills.

Murphy was at Raczowski's floor desk with his brother, Wally, and sister-in-law, Annette. His father and mother, Bogdan and Sonia Raczowski, were in the front row of the balcony with uncle Ziggy and aunt Adela Zomar. "They're waving," said Murphy, waving back.

"I've requested to serve on Public Health and Public Utilities," said Raczowski, a 28-year-old Young Republican activist who won his seat after a near miss in the 1994 primary. "There's a lot of influx right now. We're still debating and negotiating amongst our caucus."

"We'll set our priorities later in January when we see what the other side is doing."

"My first bill? I have eight sitting on my desk right now. We're not turning in bills yet (the formal document submitted to the clerk) until Jan. 23."

"In California, we see what happened with the O.J. Simpson trial (in which he was acquitted of the criminal charge of murder) but the family is suing O.J. under civil law. You should have that same opportunity in Michigan — not just reparations but help the victim or victim's family by instituting civil liability."

Raczowski drew office 719 Olds Plaza (soon to be renamed after the late Gov. George W. Romney), across Capitol Avenue from the Capitol Building. His phone number will be the same as Jan Dolan's, his predecessor: 517-373-1793.

Staffers will be Marsha Andrews, administrative assistant, and Mindy Bowen, legislative aide.

Raczowski remembers his first visit to the Capitol, in 1982. "I was a volunteer in Dick Headlee's (gubernatorial) campaign. I was impressed with the ability to mold people's lives and either help or hinder the state."

That's one of the main reasons I ran — to help the state."

He will have seat No. 9, in the second row and third desk from the right (east) aisle. Visitors who want to spot him should sit in the left (west) gallery near the front of the hall.

Meanwhile, Raczowski is transferring control of a family printing and marketing business and completing a last course at Detroit College of Law. Going to law school is a common practice in the Legislature. Some 24 years ago, a freshman state representative named John Engler went to law school at night.

Welcome aboard

"Today it's our turn to congratulate you and the Democrats," said House GOP minority leader Ken Sikkema, as he seconded the nomination of Curtis Hertel, D-Detroit, to be speaker of the House.

The vote was 106-0, with four absent. Sikkema said he made the seconding speech for the Democratic takeover because Hertel had made a similar conciliatory speech when Republicans had 56-54 control of the chamber two years ago.

Jan. 9 was the first payday. But actual work won't begin until sometime this week, at the earliest, when leaders make committee assignments.

Republicans cut the number of committees to 22 in 1995. But Hertel's Democrats, with 59-52 control after the 1996 election, plan to expand the list to at least 29, including one on consumer protection.

On Jan. 27 the Hall of Representatives (formal name of the chamber) will be packed again as senators and appellate court judges join them to hear Gov. John Engler's seventh state of the state address.

A deadline many want to ignore is Jan. 30, the final date on which legislators must act if they want to reject pay increases recommended by the State Officers Compensation Commission. No action means a pay hike.

Bill Ballenger, former legislator and entrepreneur of Inside Michigan Politics newsletter, predicted "no roaring out of the blocks with an aggressive legislative agenda" from House Democrats because it will be shot down by the Senate, still controlled 22-16 by Republicans.

Most of Wednesday's session was eaten up by drawing for seats on the House floor, by seniority and lot. Front row cen-



PHOTO BY TOM HOFFERER

Family gathering: New state Rep. Andrew Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills, is joined on the state House floor with his girlfriend Christa Murphy, left, and brother Wally, right. An entourage of 56 — made up of family, friends and supporters — traveled to Lansing to wish the representative well in his day on the job.

ter aisle seats were reserved for leaders Hertel and Sikkema. Veteran women lawmakers opted for a cluster of seats two-thirds of the way back along the center aisle.

A prayer

Adam Cardinal Maida, Catholic archbishop of Detroit, opened with a non-denominational prayer, asking "your guidance to broaden our vision to the long-range results of our actions... for humility, patience and courage to respect the steady pace of human dialogue... and the roller-coaster of public service."

Chief Justice Conrad Mallett Jr. administered the ceremonial oath of office, although most members had taken their oaths in their home districts days earlier.

The election of Hertel as speaker and Sikkema as minority leader was decided days after the Nov. 5 election, when elected members caucused even before their terms began. Party caucuses in the Legislature are exempt from the Open Meetings Act.



KNIT DRESS CLEARANCE

CHOOSE FROM A DAZZLING ASSORTMENT OF FUN AND FASHIONABLE KNIT DRESSES FOR ALL OCCASIONS. MISSES AND PETITES SIZES \$89-\$149, CLAIREWOOD FOR THE FULLER FIGURED WOMAN \$104-\$165.

Jacobson's

BIRMINGHAM
210-344-9000

EVONIA
313-541-7606

ROCHESTER HILLS
248-699-8000

ON THE AGENDA

Farmington Hills City Council
City Hall, 474-8115

7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 13

Agenda items include:
■ Presentation of employee awards.

■ Consider enacting an amendment to the city code to provide for development of site condominiums in Farmington Hills.

■ Discuss proposed meeting agenda for the joint meeting

with the City of Farmington and the Farmington school board.

Special meeting
Farmington Board of Education

Lewis Schulman Center,
489-3300

6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 13

Agenda items include:
■ Approval of preliminary

application to call a bond and millage renewal election.

Democrats to meet

What's in store for the coming year will be discussed at the next meeting of the Farmington Democratic Club, at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 15, at the Botsford Inn.

A panel composed of school board President David York, Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane and Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi will give a preview of what to expect in their jurisdictions during 1997.

A question-and-answer period will follow. The meetings of the club are open to all.

Musicale offers cash awards

Applications are available for students in grades 7-12 who plan to compete in Farmington Musicales Awards for Musical Excellence. This annual competition offers cash awards to further music education.

It is open to students who attend Farmington public or private schools, to children of a Farmington Musicales member and to those whose primary residence is in Farmington or Farmington Hills, but who attend school elsewhere.

Applications are being distributed this week to the music departments in all Farmington-area middle and high schools. They may also be obtained by calling Connie Randall, 478-8932. Applications must be completed and returned, postmarked by midnight, by Monday, Feb. 10.

This year, the competition will be Saturday, March 1, at Nardin Park United Methodist Church in Farmington Hills. Categories will be: piano, string, wind, brass and percussion instruments divided into three grade levels: 7-8, 9-10, 11-12. The vocal category will be divided into two grade

levels: 9-10, 11-12. Cash awards will be given in each grade division.

Two other scholarships will be awarded. The Strey-McCallum Memorial Piano Award, for the student who is judged to be the "most outstanding pianist" regardless of grade level, will be awarded. The Farmington Community Band will also award one outstanding musician in the wind/brass/percussion category, regardless of grade level.

First and second place winners will perform their winning compositions in a recital at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 16, at Nardin Park United Methodist Church. Awards will be presented at that time, as will the Strey-McCallum Piano and Farmington Community Band awards.

The recital is open to all. The Farmington Musicales is a member of the National Federation of Music Clubs.

Meetings and programs are held on the first Wednesday of each month in the Farmington Hills Library. For more information, call Connie Randall at 478-8932 or Bev Notestine at 478-1729.